

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)**

March 19, 2002

7:00 PM

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Guinta.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Wihby, Gatsas, Guinta, Sysyn, Osborne, Pinard, O'Neil,
Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, Thibault, Forest

Mayor Baines advised that the purpose of the special meeting was to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to two minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

Mayor Baines requested that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Eric Sawyer, 40 Wilmot Street, Manchester stated:

I would like to speak to you tonight about schools again. When I was on the task force for schools I identified a lot of other communities have entered into business education partnerships. You enhance your schools with negative tax impact. If this City has economic development money that they can score baseball with I am sure that they have economic development money that they can score business school partnerships to improve our schools with negative tax impact. I have outlined in the handout I have given you tonight some things that other communities have done and it is a very...I won't go into all of the details but there are very lucrative school/business partnerships and very innovative ones that have been done in communities across America. If you look at the normalized curve that I put in there, if you look at the way we keep going with educational obligations and our available tax burden, the educational obligations will soon out pace your available tax burden. That is

from the US Department of Education. Those are just normalized numbers and you can get them from their website. They have an Educational Resource Information Center and you can find a lot of this information out. I encourage you if you are going to look for...if you have economic development money to look for business/school partnerships that will improve our schools with a zero or negative tax impact to the City of Manchester.

Bill Beaton, 8 Chauncey Avenue, Manchester stated:

Thank you very much for allowing me to speak before you this evening. Normally I would stay home and watch this on TV and when I get excited only my wife and the neighbors hear me. I read something in the paper today, which excited me and that is...I guess the question is who could be opposed to a worker friendly bill. I think that another apt name for it might be a taxpayer unfriendly bill. The cost of providing health insurance for an employer today for a family is between \$5,000 and \$10,000 a year. For a person who makes \$50,000, that is a 20% increase. If we make contractors increase their costs to this extent, prices will go up. There is no question about it. If you look at the states or some communities in states that currently have this worker friendly proposal, they all have something in common and that is they are very highly taxed states. Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. The states that don't have it – New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont are states which are considered at least relatively to have lower tax rates. The idea that this would allow more contractors to bid doesn't make sense to me because some contractors provide health insurance and others don't. If today we allow all of them to bid...if we only allow those who have health insurance then some will be ineligible to bid on contracts and, therefore, I think the prices will go up and the competition will actually decrease rather than increase. Thank you very much for allowing me to speak this evening.

John Gimas, 116 Portsmouth Avenue, Manchester stated:

I am a local electrical contractor and I have been in business for approximately 18 years. I just wanted to say a couple of quick words on the responsible employer ordinance that is going to be presented tonight. A lot of small businesses in this state and in the region have done a very good job as far as supplying good wages, excellent wages and I know it because I have to do it, and excellent health benefits to their employees. I think an ordinance like this would do a disservice to the City as far as not allowing a number of different contractors, both in the sub-contracting industry and the general contracting industry, to provide bids to the City for work. It would definitely raise the price of contracts significantly and I think it is a...I don't like to say this but I really don't feel that government has a place where independent businesses attempt to run their businesses successfully and provide for their employees. I don't feel that this is a good thing for this City or for this area. Thank you very much.

Billy Dodd, 181 Mammoth Road, Manchester stated:

You guys are going to find this hard to believe but I paid a visit to the civic center the other night for a hockey game. It is a nice place. Our tax dollars were well spent. Guess what guys? It is too small. The monster trucks I don't think will be back. They didn't get a very good performance there. You will never get the rodeo in there like I thought you would. The footprint is too small. Tonight is going to be secret government, the leak and mortgage and rents. Your Honor, two weeks ago I made a request of you to look into if there were any criminal complaints pending against a member of this Board. The citizens of Manchester only get their news through news sources about City government. Why isn't your office or the City Solicitor's Office, if there is a complaint, forwarding it to the Police Department so it can be founded or unfounded? Baseball. I don't think there was a leak so to speak. If there was, I think it was intentional. Excellent article in the Hippo Press. Read between the lines. Who stood to gain out of this? The gentleman who wanted to force the new stadium proposal needed some type of agreement signed by you guys that night so he could pursue bidding on a franchise or maybe somebody wants to get their name on a plaque down there, I don't know. Delay of game. Alderman Wihby you are quoted in here "delay of game." \$50,000 for the baseball study we may not need to spend. Past Boards have diverted money that has been appropriated for one purpose to other purposes. How about putting that money towards a new gym floor at Memorial High School? We built the civic center. Make no mistake about it, nobody else is helping to pay for it but now we are going to have to rent it to have high school graduation there? Come on guys and girls, we own that building. Expenses to have a function there, yes, but in any way pay any type of rent for something we are already making a mortgage payment on? It is crazy. Here is a copy of today's paper. It must not be an election year because it seems like the aspects of a senior center have been forgotten. Maybe it won't surface again for two years. I hope not. Thank you.

Gary Abbott, 23 Birchdale Road, Bow stated:

I am here on the responsible bidder ordinance and I don't know exactly what is appropriate but I was concerned about the article that was in the newspaper. What I have for the Aldermen if it is okay is I have a copy of a similar bill that was proposed in the Legislature that failed as well as a copy of our official...as representing the Associated General Contractor, which represents contractors both building and highway construction throughout the state and the position paper discloses some of those reasons why we do not support the proposed ordinance that is before you. I think there is a couple of other issues in the ordinance that were not in the legislation regarding residency requirements. It has us concerned because the construction industry is a very mobile industry. I represent contractors who not only work in New Hampshire, but they work in Maine and Vermont and we would hate to see that we start to put up barriers which limit where contractors can go because as we all know work varies from place to place and it also can shift and certain areas

can have more construction than others and companies have to deal with that. I will leave those papers with you. I would also...on the report from the Legislature I even have handwritten on that report the inexpedient to legislate and what that vote was. I believe it was 13-1 or something like that. I don't have it in front of me because it is being handed out. I appreciate the opportunity.

Ron St. Cyr, 202 Gold Street, Manchester stated:

I am a homeowner and have lived in the City of Manchester for 58 years. I worked for 25 years as a special police officer and 35 years in the construction industry. The City is in serious need to start hiring reputable contractors. A few years back the City hired a contractor to do a project on South Beech Street. The contractor had three workers, one truck and one backhoe. The truck broke down and they couldn't finish the project in time so the City had to go out and hire another contractor to finish the job. The West Side Arena. The floor cracked, the roof leaked, the walls sagged and the contractor filed bankruptcy. The taxpayers of the City had to pay for the repairs. Two months later the *Union Leader* reported that the same contractor had another City job under another name. As a special police officer for 25 years doing traffic detail, I have seen many small contractors take shortcuts using bad fill, burning asphalt in trenches. They bid low and the taxpayers have to pay. They don't have a reputation to worry about. They change their name and they are back in business again. The taxpayers deserve the best for their dollar. Hiring contractors who do not provide health insurance, not just make it available, worker's compensation and unemployment benefits really doesn't...they really don't care about their people if they don't provide these benefits so why should the worker's care about the quality of their work? Some will argue that it will cost the taxpayers more money. If the job is done by a reputable contractor using qualified craftspeople it is only done once, not twice. Thank you.

Peter Vinal, 730 Bodwell Road, Manchester stated:

I support the responsible employee ordinance for the City of Manchester. For too long the construction workers have been treated like second class citizens. Companies continue to mistreat their workers and avoid paying worker's compensation and federal taxes. They also don't offer health and benefits or even training to their employees. This ordinance will insure that all of the Manchester residents who work in construction within the City limits will be treated fairly. Thank you very much.

D.J. Murphy, PO Box 10143, Bedford stated:

I am here to talk about ceremonial awards. I would like to object to the awards being accepted by the City of Manchester for any event that does not occur within the borders of the State of New Hampshire. I am not sure what any of you know about New York City or what you know about the World Trade Centers for example. Recently you accepted a certificate that came from New York City from a firefighter by the name of Michael Verzi

and in return for some reason he was given a key to the City. Why would you give him a key to the City of Manchester? Did he come here and save us or something? I don't think so so I want to object to that aspect of it and the reason being that we are going to need that space on the wall one day, we are going to need that ceremony, we are going to need this hall for our own heroes, our own citizens who are going to be here for whatever catastrophic events strike the State or the City. Thank you.

There being no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman Thibault, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business was presented, and on motion of Alderman Garrity, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk